

# **Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Recognition**

Collin County Teen Court  
2300 Bloomdale Road, Suite 4192  
McKinney, Texas 75071

Grant Proposal

to

CoServ Charitable Foundation

April 9, 2012

## **Statement of Purpose**

Collin County Teen Court provides alternative sentencing by a jury of their peers for first-time youth offenders while placing an emphasis on the impact to the victim and establishing responsibility for their actions. In addition, both volunteers and offenders receive education in the legal and judicial process to establish a positive relationship between youth and the community.

## **Program Description**

Collin County Teen Court was established in late-2006 as a voluntary program for juvenile offenders to “pay” for their citation through community service and involvement in the judicial process. With Court and parental approval, juveniles (ages 12 to 18) charged with less-serious Class C misdemeanors and no prior arrest record may plead guilty and be referred to Teen Court. Offenses heard over the past 5 years include truancy (33%); theft under \$50 (28%); speeding and driving offenses (18%); disorderly conduct (7%); possession/consumption of alcohol or tobacco (6%); assault (4%); and criminal mischief, classroom disruption, and other violations (4%).

Following referral by one of three participating Collin County Justices of the Peace or the Frisco Municipal Court, a Teen Court hearing is set. At the hearing, teenagers fulfill all court roles – attorneys, jurors, clerks, and bailiffs – with the exception of the judge, who is usually a practicing attorney volunteer. The Teen Court process provides a forum for defendants to explain their involvement in the offense and admit their wrongful acts before a jury of their peers, accepting whatever sentence is imposed. Sentencing options usually include community service, apology letters, research papers/essays, rehabilitation classes or counseling, and future Teen Court jury duty. Sentences are meant to be constructive, enable offenders to understand the harm caused by their behavior, make amends to the person(s) affected by their actions, and improve relationships with victims and the community.

Offenders have 90 days to complete all sentence terms. Upon completion, the misdemeanor will be expunged from the juvenile’s record. Since program inception, over 1,500 cases have been processed, and offenders have completed over 38,000 community service hours with an 82% success rate. By bringing the teens before a jury of their peers, the program helps juvenile offenders take responsibility for their actions, applies positive peer pressure to change behavior, and provides teens with a positive experience in the judicial system, thereby deterring the potential for future unlawful behavior.

Through youth volunteer opportunities, Teen Court promotes community involvement, enhances critical thinking and public speaking skills, and provides opportunities for leadership, personal growth, and enrichment. Last year alone, over 1,200 youth volunteers donated 4,389 hours to Teen Court activities. Volunteers are recruited from local schools and can participate in Teen Court hearings 4 to 5 times per month, attorney training, and the annual North Texas Teen Court Competition. Last year Collin County Teen Court placed second in the competition and also received the Teen Court Association of Texas Spotlight Achievement Award – the top teen court award for Texas. Each year, Collin County Teen Court awards a few \$400 to \$1,200 scholarships to high school seniors based on active involvement and an essay about the impact of Teen Court for both volunteers and defendants.

Unfortunately, other than the Teen Court Coordinator’s salary and benefits, no Collin County funding is provided for this program. Funding for supplies, recruitment, training, and volunteer recognition is provided entirely by donations from local lawyers and businesses. With support from the CoServ Charitable Foundation, Collin County Teen Court will be able to provide additional volunteer scholarships; improve recruiting and training materials; and finance food, lodging, and transportation services for training and events.

## **Overall Program Goals**

The main goals of the Collin County Teen Court are to

1. promote educational development, personal success, and civic engagement;
2. establish positive relationships between youth and the community;
3. divert first time offenders out of the traditional juvenile justice setting through early intervention; and
4. prevent further delinquency by empowering and educating youth.

## **Project Goals and Objectives**

Goal – Increase capacity of Teen Court and encourage active youth volunteer participation with Teen Court

Objectives

- ☐ Attend 4 volunteer fairs at local schools and colleges each month during the school year
- ☐ Recruit 20 new youth volunteers per month
- ☐ Schedule all newly recruited volunteers to participate in a teen court hearing within three months

Goal – Hold offenders accountable and provide a positive judicial system experience

Objectives

- ☐ Schedule hearings for all offenders within 5 weeks of referral
- ☐ Ensure 85% of defendants complete community service hours within 90 days of sentencing
- ☐ Ensure 30% of defendants return and serve as a Teen Court juror

Goal – Provide youth with education and hands-on experience in the judicial system

Objectives

- ☐ Conduct 60 Teen Court hearings annually
- ☐ Train 80 youth volunteers to serve as attorneys annually
- ☐ Prepare 20 youth participants for annual North Texas Teen Court Competition

Goal – Reward active participation in Teen Court

Objectives

- ☐ Award \$1,000 scholarships to 10 high school senior volunteers to encourage higher education
- ☐ Provide 10 adult and 15 teen volunteer awards

## Budget

Item	Description	Grant Funding
<i>Recruitment</i>		
Pens	1000 pens @ \$0.60	\$ 600.00
Pencils	1000 pencils @ \$0.60	\$ 600.00
Booth Display	Telescoping banner and stand, full-color graphic	\$ 600.00
Informational Handouts	1000 handouts @ \$0.06	\$ 60.00
<i>Training</i>		
Teen Court Orientation	Materials and food for 80 volunteers @ \$10	\$ 800.00
Teen Court Competition Training	Materials and food for 23 volunteers @ \$10	\$ 230.00
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Internship	6 shirts @ \$30; meals for 1 week, 6 interns @ \$8	\$ 420.00
<i>Recognition</i>		
Adult Volunteer Awards	10 awards (glass paperweights) @ \$16	\$ 160.00
Youth Volunteer Awards	15 awards (service award pins) @ \$16	\$ 240.00
Scholarships	10 scholarships @ \$1,000	\$ 10,000.00
Scholarship and Awards Reception	Food for 60 persons @ \$14	\$ 840.00
		<b>\$ 14,780.00</b>

CoServ funding will support the program for 12 months. Any donations received during the year from other sources will be used to provide additional scholarships.

### *Recruitment*

Professional display booth signage and printed materials, along with logoed pens and pencils, will make the volunteer fair table more appealing, resulting in higher traffic and increased recruiting potential.

### *Training*

A Teen Court Orientation will be held to train 80 youth volunteers to serve as attorneys during the summer. For the annual North Texas Teen Court Competition held each March, 20 youth and 3 adult volunteers will prepare and train prior to the event. In addition, breakfast will be provided on the day of the competition.

In July, 6 youth volunteers will be selected for a 1 week internship. Interns will visit different County departments, such as the jail, juvenile detention center, Justice of the Peace courts, Human Resources, and Commissioners Court, and learn how each functions as part of the judicial and county process.

### *Recognition*

A Scholarship and Awards Reception will be held in the spring for county and elected officials to recognize the contributions made by all Teen Court volunteers. Additionally, 10 adult and 15 youth volunteers will be awarded for their outstanding service, and scholarships will be provided for 10 graduating high school seniors to support higher education.